Bonded child labour

486. SHRI HARVENDRA SINGH HANSPAL: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news report under the caption "10 m. children are bonded labourers" which appeared in the National Herald of the 26th January, 1990 regarding bonded child labour in the country;

(b) if so, what is Government's assessment about the number of child bonded workers;

(c) what steps are being taken to get them released and to pay them the amount payable to such liberated workers; and

(d) whether Government propose to take any firm steps against the employers engaged in keeping bonded labour?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND WELFARE (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The responsibility for identification, release and rehabilitation of Bonded Labour under the Bonded Labour System (Abolition Act, 1976 is that of the State Governments concerned. As on 31-3-1989, the State Governments had reported identification of 2,42,618 Bonded Labourers. Under the Act, no distinction has been made between 'child' and 'adult' bonded labourer'

(d) The enforcement of the provisions of the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976 are reviewed from time to time by the Ministry of Labour and State Governments advised to take various steps in the matter of identification and rehabilitation. Recently, a letter was addressed to all the Chief Ministers to ensure proper enforcement of various labour laws in the unorganised sector, including the Bonded labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976.

Availability of cheap power, machines and other agricultural inputs

487. SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) what schemes, if any, have lately been laid down and what steps have been taken to ensure easy and cheap availability of power and machines and other modern agriculture inputs to small and marginal farmers; and

(b) what is the percentage of agricultural produce contributed at present by small and marginal farmers and how for it is proposed to be increased by the end of the 8th Five Year Plan Period?

THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI DEVI LAL): (a) In order to ensure easy and cheap availability of power and machines and other modern agriculture inputs to small & marginal farmers, the following Central/Centrally Sponsored Scheme are in operation:

(1) Jaldhara.

(2) Establishment of Farmers' Agro-Service Centres for customs hiring and popularisation of improved implements and hand tools.

(3) Enrcouraging irrigation through the use of Sprinklers/Drip System, Hydrams, Water Turbines, man and animal operated.

(4) Assistance to Small & Marginal Farmers for Increasing Agricultural Production.